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STATE FOR NEA/ARPI, NEA/PPD, NEA/P, PA, INR/R/MR

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: AMIR'S HEALTH, FOREIGN MINISTER VISITS WASHINGTON

¶1. Summary: Kuwaiti media reported on the visit of the Amir, Shaykh Jabir Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, to the United States for "pre-planned" medical check-ups with assurances that the Amir's health was good. All Newspapers reprinted the Kuwait News Agency's (<http://www.kuna.net.kw>) reports on Foreign Minister Shaykh Dr. Muhammad Al-Sabah's meetings with Vice President Cheney and Secretary Rice. Most headlines focused on the granting of full political rights for Kuwaiti women and the strong relationship between the U.S. and Kuwait. End summary.

"A Great Step"

¶2. Al-Qabas (Arabic-language daily, circ. 65,000), May 22, 2005, p.4: Kuwait is determined to continue its reform plans: "the United States is pleased with Kuwait's decision to give women their full political rights," quoting Vice President Cheney.

¶3. Al-Anba (Arabic-language daily, circ. 40,000) front-page headline on May 23, 2005: Shaykh Sabah Al-Ahmed [Kuwait's Prime Minister]: The Amir is in good health; he will soon come back to us safe; Women's rights were not imposed from the outside; No one tells us what to do. The Prime Minister was quoted as saying: "I would like to tell everyone that our Amir's health is very well. Kuwaiti women got their rights in a democratic process which reflected the wish of HRH Amir Sabah, and the public's will translated that wish into reality."

¶4. Al-Anba (Arabic-language daily, circ. 40,000) front-page headline on May 22, 2005: Cheney: Giving Kuwaiti women their full rights was done through pure internal will: "The U.S. Vice President Cheney told me [FM Shaykh Muhammad] that the decision [women's rights] was a great step, because it was an exclusive Kuwaiti initiative." Speaking to an audience of more than 1,300 people at the World Economic Forum in Jordan, First-Lady Laura Bush also congratulated Kuwait on its achievement on women's rights."

"Committed to continuing our reform plans"

¶5. Al-Watan (Arabic-language daily, circ. 65,000), May 21, 2005, p. 4: Muhammad Al-Sabah, "We are committed to continue political and economic reforms in our country": Secretary Rice told reporters that negotiations with Shaykh

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Muhammad Al-Sabah were excellent. She said that Kuwait and the U.S. share a strong friendship. The U.S. Secretary of State reiterated the United State's appreciation of the decision to grant women their full political rights.

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